AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An air bearing slider comprising:

a slider body including a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides and including an elongate length between the leading and trailing edges forming a leading edge portion, a trailing edge portion and an intermediate portion proximate to a center axis of the slider body and a cross width between the opposed sides ~~and the intermediate portion having a length dimension no larger than length dimensions of the leading edge portion and the trailing edge portion~~ and the ~~-~~ slider body including a center portion and opposed side portions; ~~and~~

~~a raised bearing surface or surfaces elevated above milled surface or surfaces and~~ a raised bearing surface or surfaces along the leading edge portion of the slider body having a narrow cross width within the center portion of the slider body and a raised bearing surface or surfaces along the intermediate portion having an expanded cross width relative to the cross width of the raised bearing surface or surfaces along the leading edge portion of the slider body; and

a stepped bearing surface or surfaces having a cross width profile that includes a narrowing cross width dimension that narrows in a direction towards the trailing edge of the slider body.

2. (cancelled)

3. (previously presented) The slider of claim 28 wherein the divergent bearing surface or surfaces include opposed side rails angled outwardly in a direction of the trailing edge .

4. (currently amended - withdrawn) The slider of claim ~~1~~28 wherein the intermediate portion includes a raised cross rail forming the raised bearing surface or surfaces along the intermediate portion of the slider body.

5. (withdrawn) The slider of claim 4 wherein the raised cross rail includes opposed side portions and the opposed side portions of the raised cross rail include leading edge trenches to pressurize the raised bearing surface or surfaces of the raised cross rail.

6. (currently amended - withdrawn) The slider of claim 28~~1~~ wherein the intermediate portion includes a stepped cross rail ~~providing a~~forming the stepped ~~interface~~bearing surface or surfaces along the intermediate portion of the slider body.

7. (previously presented) The slider of claim 28 wherein the divergent bearing surface or surfaces include raised bearing rails on opposed sides of a cross axis of the slider body along the intermediate portion of the slider body and the raised bearing rails angle outwardly in a direction toward the trailing edge of the slider body to form the narrow leading edge cross width along a leading edge portion and the expanded intermediate cross width along the intermediate portion of the slider body.

8. (currently amended) The slider of claim 7 wherein the raised bearing rails extend from a raised center ~~pad~~portion and the slider includ~~in~~ges a stepped bearing surface elevated from ~~a~~the cavity surface having a narrow cross width along the leading edge

portion and an expanded cross width along ~~a~~the intermediate portion of the slider body, wherein the raised bearing rails and the raised center ~~pad~~portion are formed on the stepped bearing surface.

9. (currently amended - withdrawn) The slider of claim 1 wherein the slider body includes a cavity surface or surfaces recessed below the raised bearing surface or surfaces and the leading edge portion includes opposed corner portions proximate to the opposed side portions and the trailing edge portion includes opposed corner portions proximate to the opposed side portions and each of the opposed corner portions forms the cavity surface or surfaces.

10. (currently amended - withdrawn) The slider of claim 2~~8~~1 wherein the intermediate portion includes a stepped cross rail having a shortened length dimension along the intermediate portion of the slider body and an expanded stepped cross dimension.

11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) An air bearing slider comprising:

a slider body having a leading edge, a trailing edge, opposed sides and a cross width between the opposed sides; and

a raised bearing surface or surfaces elevated above a recessed surface or surfaces and the raised bearing surface or surfaces having a narrow cross width along a leading edge portion of the slider body and a raised center portion spaced from opposed sides proximate to the trailing edge of the slider body.

Claims 13-14 (Cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The slider of claim 12 wherein the raised bearing surface or surfaces include divergent bearing rails or surfaces which extend outwardly from a raised center portion along the leading edge portion of the slider body.

16. (currently amended) The slider of claim 15 ~~and further including a stepped bearing surface recessed from the raised bearing surface or surfaces and elevated above a cavity surface and~~wherein the divergent bearing rails or surfaces are formed on ~~the~~a stepped bearing surface along an intermediate portion of the slider body.

Claims 17-19 (cancelled)

20. (currently amended) An air bearing slider comprising:
a slider body including a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides; and
bearing surface means on the slider body for ~~providing a nodal bearing pressure profile to~~ limiting off nodal pressurization.

21. (currently amended) An air bearing slider comprising:
a slider body having a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides; ~~and~~
a raised bearing surface or surfaces having a perimeter surface profile including a narrow leading edge cross width, an expanded intermediate cross width and a trailing edge profile having a narrow cross width relative to the expanded intermediate cross width and a

raised center pad proximate to the trailing edge spaced from opposed sides of the slider body; and

a stepped bearing surface proximate to the raised center pad and recessed from the raised center pad and elevated from a cavity surface.

22. (previously presented) The slider of claim 3 wherein the angled side rails extend from a raised center portion having a narrow width dimension to provide the narrow cross width for the raised bearing surface or surfaces proximate to the leading edge of the slider body.

23. (currently amended) The slider of claim 3 and comprising a leading edge stepped surface elevated from ~~a~~the cavity surface and recessed from the raised bearing surface or surfaces of the angled side rails.

24. (currently amended) The slider of claim 3 wherein the slider body includes a stepped bearing surface having a tapered outer profile elevated from ~~a~~the cavity surface and the angled side rails are formed on the tapered stepped bearing surface.

25. (currently amended) The slider of claim 28 ~~wherein the~~ including a stepped bearing surface or surfaces recessed from the raised surface or surfaces and elevated from the cavity surface proximate to the divergent bearing surface or surfaces to pressurize the divergent bearing surface or surfaces.

Claims 26-27 (cancelled).

28. (previously presented) The slider of claim 21 wherein the raised bearing surface or surfaces include divergent bearing

surface or surfaces extending along an intermediate portion of the slider body.

Claim 29. (cancelled).

30. (new) The slider of claim 1 wherein each of the raised bearing surface or surfaces on the leading edge portion of the slider body collectively form a narrow cross width profile within the center portion of the slider body.